



International Cooperative Development:

A proven business model for economic opportunity and stability through public-private partnerships

For more than 150 years, the cooperative business model has been a dynamic private-sector engine for economic opportunity and stability around the world. Here are five reasons why cooperatives can, and should, continue to play a crucial role in U.S. foreign policy.

1. Jobs and broad-based U.S. support: 120 million Americans can't be wrong. They're members of U.S.-based cooperatives, which generate 2.1 million jobs and \$65 billion in annual revenue.

- The involvement of U.S. cooperatives in overseas activities grew from the conviction that the cooperative business model, which has helped millions of Americans, could help poor and low-income people in developing countries achieve a better way of life.
- Cooperatives provide the framework for members to build sustainable businesses, strengthen their skills in democracy and, ultimately, lead to a more stable, prosperous world.

2. Connection to markets, services: 5.8 million cooperative members can't be wrong.

These are the members of cooperatives established with the know-how and expertise of the eight member organizations of the U.S. Overseas Cooperative Development Council (OCDC).

- 49 rural electrification projects in the Philippines provide power for 4.3 million co-op members; Fair Trade-certified coffee cooperatives in Ethiopia, Rwanda, East Timor and Central America link thousands of smallholder farmers directly with global markets and their premium coffee prices; 46,000 members of health-care co-ops in Uganda now have reliable access to care, including bed nets to prevent malaria and Zika; 92,000 members in Russia access credit and other financial services through over 800 rural credit cooperatives.
- OCDC members are global leaders in cooperative development in Africa, Latin America and Asia. They apply their expertise and approaches in a wide range of countries, settings and sectors (agriculture, savings and credit, health care, commerce, electricity).
- With multi-year projects in over 70 countries, OCDC members implement the largest portfolio of cooperative development programs in the world.

3. Investment not “give-away”: International cooperative development is sustainable.

This private-sector solution combines concern for community with a business discipline. It brings people together through democratically governed businesses to meet their mutual needs. And it fosters self-reliance. Cooperative development also:

- Creates private enterprises, builds open markets, provides jobs and generates income at the local level
- Offers opportunity for minorities, women and the poor to enter the mainstream economy

- Promotes grassroots democracy
- Alleviates poverty and enables people to realize lasting economic independence and prosperity
- Helps achieve social goals, including access to health care and education, which fosters in-country and global stability

4. Cost-effective: The cooperative model encourages innovative, effective (and cost-effective) solutions.

- OCDC members have been development partners with the U.S. government for more than 40 years, but also receive funding and collaborate to achieve results through innovative public-private partnerships.
- U.S. cooperatives send their members as volunteers around the world to build sustainable cooperative businesses, while building good will for the U.S.
- Cooperatives share their business expertise with people in developing countries to create lasting economic development.
- Trading relationships develop between cooperatives in the U.S. and those in developing countries, which increases jobs at home and security around the world.

5. U.S. values, global progress: Economic stability fosters political stability. When people have jobs, can feed their children, find adequate health care and experience an overall better life, communities, countries and the world become more stable.

- Through old-fashioned self-help, cooperatives nurture economic development and wealth generation for their members.
- Cooperatives expose people to democracy. For the vast majority of members of new co-ops, this is their first experience participating in a democratic system. Co-ops put democratic and accountable governance — as well as emphasis on service to members — into action and at the forefront of their members' lives.
- In countries that have experienced ethnic tension, conflict or dysfunction, co-ops contribute to rebuilding the political, economic and social fabric.

Cooperative development: An objective of U.S. foreign assistance through MCC, USAID, USDA and others. The cooperative system has played a significant role in the development of the U.S. economy. In the U.S., our cooperative systems received assistance from extension agencies, government programs that made capital available to cooperative systems, and farmers associations working together to create cooperatives. This type of public-private partnership led to cooperative networks that have achieved size and scale and continue to benefit of millions of Americans. OCDC already has demonstrated that similar methods can yield big results internationally. We are prepared to take cooperative development to the next level to foster local prosperity and bring economic stability to regions throughout the world.

About OCDC

OCDC brings together organizations committed to building a more prosperous world through cooperatives. Its mission is to champion, advocate and promote effective and sustainable international cooperative development.

OCDC's members are: ACDI/VOCA, Cooperative Resources International, Global Communities, HealthPartners, Land O'Lakes International Development, NCBA CLUSA, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the World Council of Credit Unions.